

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 2 are pending in the present application. Claim 3 was previously cancelled. Claim 4 is newly added.

The specification has been objected to for failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. Claims 1 and 2 have correspondingly been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for failing to comply with the written description requirement. The objection and rejection are both directed to the language that describes the pores formed between the filaments. Applicant respectfully submits that the present amendment to claim 1 sufficiently addresses this concern, as the language in question has been deleted. Applicant requests that the objection to the specification, and the rejection of claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, be withdrawn.

Claims 1-2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 3,278,967, to Hagerman ("Hagerman") in view of United States Patent No. 4,501,783, to Hiragami et al. ("Hiragami"), and further in view of United States Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0111406 to Kwak et al. ("Kwak"), as evidenced by the Kirk article attached to the Office Action. Claim 1 is independent. Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 1 recites a spread mat. The spread mat comprises, *inter alia*, a porous mat body containing stacked and looped resin filaments, the porous mat body having a front surface, and the resin filaments having front portions in the front surface. The spread mat further comprises an adhesive agent spray-formed on the front surface of the porous mat body such that the adhesive agent is attached directly to the front portions of the filaments, and the particles are directly attached to the front portions of the filaments through the adhesive agent.

Hagerman is directed to fibrous doormats formed from curled animal hair. (col.

1, l. 54-55) A mat is formed with this animal hair, and an adhesive is applied, so that the hair filaments are bound together. (col. 1, l. 63-69) This bonding with the adhesive is required to give the filaments protection from "water and other deleterious agents." (col. 2, l. 19-23)

The cited combination of Hagerman, Hiragami, Kwak, and Kirk fails to disclose or suggest the spread mat of claim 1. Hagerman discloses a double-coating system, i.e. adhesive coating 10, and non-slip coating 12, which contains particles 11. Adhesive coating 10 is applied to the hair filaments 8 and 9, and non-slip coating 12, containing particles 11, is then applied to the adhesive 10. (col. 2, l. 51-56, Fig. 3) Claim 1, by contrast, requires that the adhesive agent is attached directly to the front portions of the filaments, and that the particles are attached directly to the filaments through the adhesive agent. In Hagerman, particles 11 are not attached directly to the hair filaments 8 and 9, but rather to adhesive coating 10. Hagerman uses two coatings, the adhesive 10 and non-slip 12. In claim 1, by contrast, only the adhesive is used, with the particles being directly attached to the filaments through the adhesive agent. This distinction is important, since it adds to the flexibility of the spread mat. With only one adhesive coating, the spread mat of claim 1 is much more flexible than the doormat of Hagerman, which has two separate coatings.

Hiragami, Kwak and the Kirk article fail to cure the above-described deficiencies of Hagerman to disclose or suggest the spread mat of claim 1, and are not relied on by the Office Action to do so. Hiragami is relied on to teach synthetic resin particles and resin filaments. Kwak is merely relied on for an aliphatic polyester for plasticizing PVC. The Kirk article is relied on for a formula to convert mesh values to particle size. Even assuming, *arguendo*, that all of these references teach what they are relied on for, none of them fail to cure the above-described deficiencies of Hagerman to disclose or suggest the spread mat of claim 1.

Therefore, claim 1 is patentable over the cited combination of Hagerman, in view of Hiragami, in further view of Kwak, as evidenced by the Kirk article, under 35 U.S.C.

§103(a), as is claim 2, which depends therefrom. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

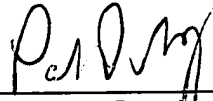
New claim 4 depends from claim 1, and further recites that the adhesive agent is spray-formed on the top surface of the spread mat only. Again, the cited combination of Hagerman, Hiragami, Kwak, and Kirk fails to disclose or suggest such a feature.

In Hagerman, the adhesive coats all of the filaments in the doormat completely. (Fig. 3) A neoprene latex is applied, which penetrates at least the upper half of the web, and coats the hair filaments. Preferably, the adhesive penetrates 60-70% of the web thickness. (col. 3, l. 61-69) Then, the web is inverted, and the “hair filaments in the other half of the web are coated.” (col. 3, l. 73-75, emphasis added) This is clearly in contrast to the requirement of claim 4 that the adhesive is spray-coated on the top surface of the spread mat only. Again, this distinction is important, since a spread mat with adhesive agent only spray-formed on a front surface will have greater flexibility. It will also be cheaper and easier to manufacture, since the adhesive agent is only applied to the front surface. This stands in contrast to applying adhesive and non-slip coatings to the entire doormat, as disclosed in Hagerman. These reasons are further support of the patentability of claim 4, in addition to those provided above in support of claim 1.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Such action is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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